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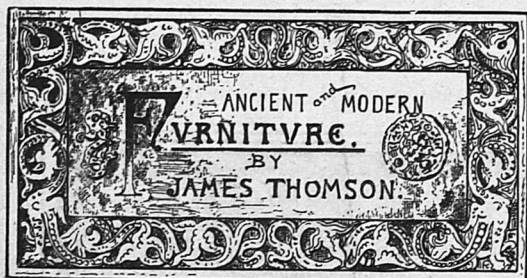
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A SERIES OF ARTICLES—NUMBER SIX.

THE ORNAMENT.

MARQUETRY, a choice form of decoration, was brought to a high state of perfection by the Venetians. This method was one of the many borrowed from the Orient, and consists of a fine inlay of ivory, metal, and woods, sometimes stained to vary the colors. The designs used by Venetians were of a geometrical character only. Florence also came into prominence for the furniture of walnut and cyprus wood, with ivory inlay which is known as Certosina work.

During the 17th century marquetry was extensively used by the Dutch in their furniture decoration; gay colors were employed, and the designs were usually representations of tulips and other flowers, birds, etc. There are many good examples held by old Hollandish families in this country, and to supply any possible demand for more it is asserted that an enterprising Americanized Dutchman has established a factory here for the production of "genuine" antiques.

It was in France, however, during the 17th and 18th centuries, that marquetry probably reached its greatest perfection. Nothing that could possibly add to the richness of effect was omitted in the production of Boule work, the invention of a cabinet maker named Boule, born in 1642. It consisted of an inlay of brass, copper, ivory, mother of pearl, colored woods, and sometimes the more valuable silver, lapis lazuli, and precious stones of divers kinds, on a ground of tortoise shell; however, brass alone in the bed of shell was the method commonly employed. The brass was often elaborately engraved, adding still more to the richness of effect. Brass mounts in repoussé were also used in his later work, as well as edgings to hold and bind the inlay in place.

The productions of Riesener, at a later period, also call for remark; he worked with woods alone, generally using rosewood, holly, maple, laburnum,

purple wood, etc.; these were used with excellent effect in the producing of inlays of exquisite beauty from graceful design. Finely modeled gilt bronze mounts, by Gouthier, a worker in brass contemporaneous with Riesener, and used on furniture made by him, added considerably to the success of *ensemble*.

Of the many other methods employed from time to time, limit of space will only permit mention of a few of the most important. These are briefly: Pietra Dura, or mosaic of hard



pebbles and precious stones, in a ground of marble; the work is very laborious and costly, the materials are expensive, and each part must be fitted to a nicety.

Gilding, another method employed from very early times, as early as the 14th century in England, where it had been brought by artists from some other country, probably Italy; this method—tooled gold work—is discernible on the famous coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, made about the year 1300. Much of the Italian work of the 15th century was heavily gilded with pure gold and painted. The effect of carved work in bas-relief was often enhanced by the use of gold

ornamented furniture by paintings of a delicate and chaste character, specimens of which now command high prices.

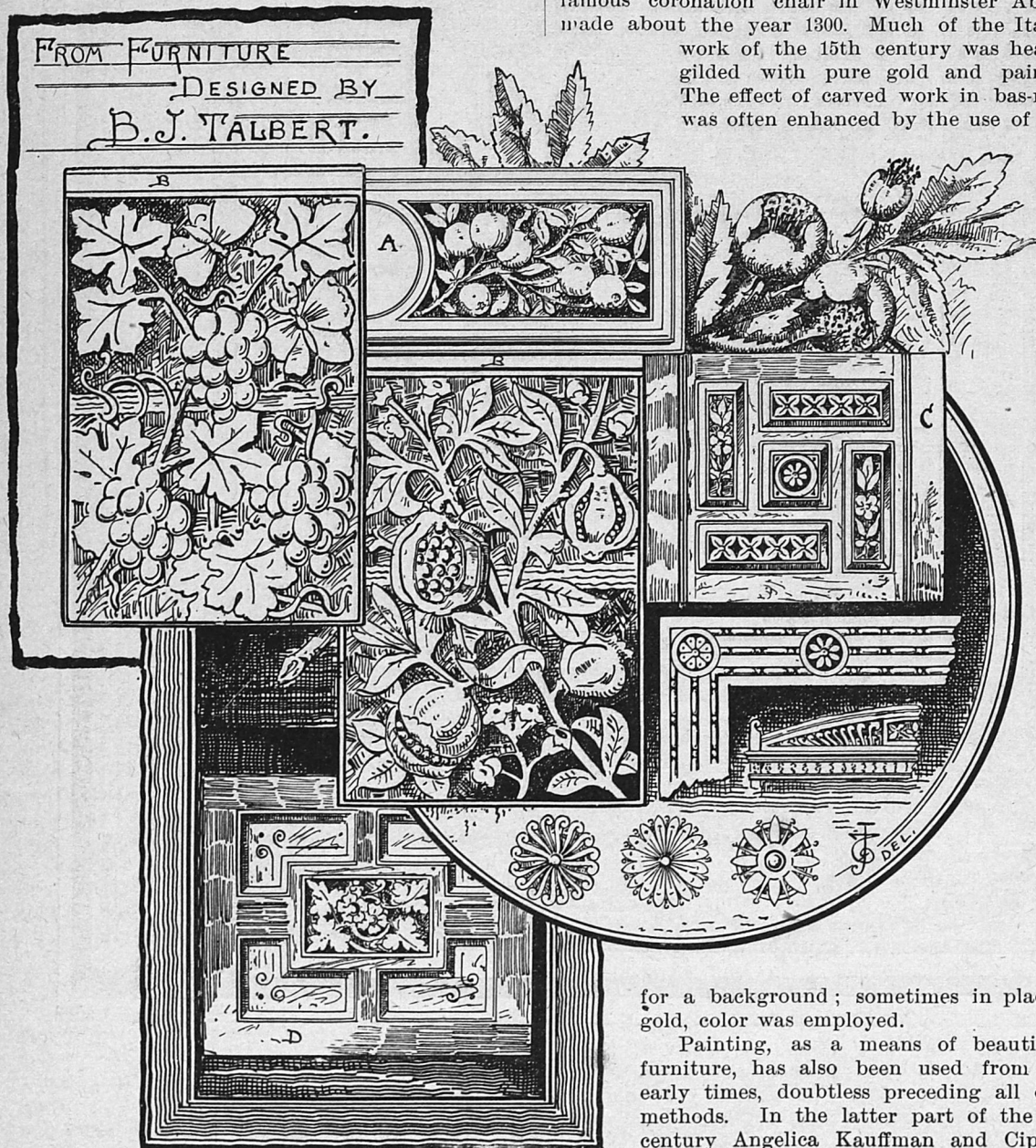
The Spaniards, profiting by the skill of the Moors, were prodigal in the use of color in ornamenting their furniture. We read of Spanish cabinets "decorated outside with fine iron work, and inside with columns of bone, painted and gilt; others again inlaid and embossed with silver."

Carving is the method usually employed as a means of ornamenting the furniture of the present time, and generally differs from that of the past in tameness and lack of character, although the design may be all that is desired, a copy from a more ancient model perhaps; the carving often has a flat putty appearance. The modern demand for smoothness of finish is partly to blame for this result. To satisfy this demand, artistically executed carving is often irretrievably ruined under the manipulations of bungling "finishers," as they are called, who deluge the delicate work with shellac, varnish, and what not, filling crevices and incisions with the stuff, until the desired result is attained. The delicate undulations of surface, which the carver imprinted with such painstaking care, are filled up solid, and the finisher proceeds to complete the work of destruction by rubbing the surface smooth with the aid of pumice stone and oil, on a piece of hair cloth. The work is now called complete; there are now no sharp edges, all is smooth and pleasant to the touch, but the life is gone, the vigor of the living plant is replaced by the flabby wilted appearance of the dying one. This description is not overdrawn; that carving is spoiled in this way is the rule rather than the exception.

Carving should retain a certain roughness; the tool marks of the worker should be no objection. Carving after the manner of cameo cutting or medallions, might be an exception, where smoothness is desirable. It is a noticeable fact, that the idea of perfection existing in the minds of many people of limited art knowledge is associated with smoothness of finish; this is applicable alike to sculpture and painting.

Carving, as a rule, should be worked from the solid wood, instead of being, as is common enough, sawed and glued on. Worked in the solid, the result must ever remain satisfactory. Elegance of leading lines is of the utmost importance, of greater importance in fact than after elaboration of the surface. No amount of after manipulation will compensate for poor outlines.

The examples shown in No. 5 are from the works of the late B. J. Talbert. A shows part panel of sideboard; B B, suggestions for carved doors; C and D, doors for sideboard.



for a background; sometimes in place of gold, color was employed.

Painting, as a means of beautifying furniture, has also been used from very early times, doubtless preceding all other methods. In the latter part of the 18th century Angelica Kauffman and Cipuana